1:Barnes E-5 (1946-1949) 1954 FR5 Ngoni FR5
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The genealogies which related members of one segment to those of another were made up not only of links from father to son but also from lord to dependant, and were expressed in terms of the names of segments rather than the names of the people who headed them. A man related himself to the Paramount Chief not by his own genealogy but by the pedigree of the segment to which he belonged.[39] Although the number of links in such a pedigree may have been half a dozen or more, it did not cover more than two or three generations, whereas in most lineage systems remembered genealogies cover many more generations. The present kinship nomenclature, which mainly employs words of Nsenga origin, does not group relatives on a lineage, or segmental, basis but by generation. Presumably the system of nomenclature in use during the early stages of the Ngoni migration was similar to the present Zulu system in which lineage categories are used slightly. Tribes like the Shona and Cewa, from whom many captives were taken, employ systems of nomenclature with great lineage emphasis, but this emphasis is patrilineal among the former and matrilineal among the latter. The difficulty of combining patrilineal and matrilineal categories may have prompted the emergence of a generation system of nomenclature.[40]

Another point of difference between the Ngoni and many people with lineage systems is that, other than possibly the rites associated with choosing a new village site, there seem to have been no ritual observances or ancestor cult which would have differentiated one segment from another and united the various segments of lower order within a higher one. The only ancestors to whom supplication was made were those of the Paramount Chief. They were believed to be concerned with the well-being of the whole nation, and when sacrifices were made to them, the officiants were not their agnatic descendants but the Paramount Chief's lieutenants. We may, however, regard the byre in the headquarters village as a ceremonial, rather than a ritual, centre for a large segment.

In these four respects the Ngoni residential system differed from most lineage systems. On the other hand, in respect of other criteria it was like them. A segment recognized its identity and unity in contrast to other groups; rights and obligations of segment membership were distinguished from those of kinship; segments endured in time beyond the death of their founding members;

[39] cf. Read, 'Tradition', p. 466.

[40] cf. Barnes, 'Fort Jameson Ngoni', pp. 221-5; Gluckman, 'Kinship and marriage', pp. 170-1; Holleman, *Shona kinship*, pp. 1-18; Pretorius, 'Terms of relationship', pp. 44-8.

1:Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)1954 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

segments nested in the same way as lineage segments; and a segment could be referred to by the name of its original head. A residential segment was not associated with a particular locality in quite the same way as lineage segments often are among settled peoples, for even the State itself was not tied to any particular place. Within the area occupied by the State at any one time, the villages belonging to one major segment seem to have intermingled with those of another, for there were not any temporary boundaries defining major segment areas, even for those led by regional governors. But smaller segments, occupying single villages or less, may be said to have been associated with a particular locality at any one time.

Our concept of a lineage system would then require considerable stretching to include the Ngoni residential system. It seems preferable to employ the wide term 'continually segmenting systems' when speaking of this general class of system, and to distinguish within this category a number of different varieties. Lineage systems belong to one variety, the Ngoni residential system to another. These two varieties do not exhaust the category. The Nyakyusa system of continually bifurcating states appears to belong to a third variety, and there may be more.

There are other criteria which have been used to distinguish different varieties of lineage system, and which we may apply summarily to the Ngoni residential system. Despite the great importance of women in the system, it was clearly a patrilineal and not a matrilineal system. It was a graded system with a single head to each segment, like the Zulu and unlike the egalitarian Nuer. The system had a single apex, one highest segment embracing the whole society, like the Gusii and unlike the multi-capped society of the Tallensi. As a corollary of this it had sharp boundaries and did not form part of a chain of interlinked societies. There was little economic differentiation save in the control of cattle and there was, on the surface, complete cultural homogeneity imposed by the State.

The characteristic formation of rump segments is lacking in many lineage systems, but is found among the Zulu and in the Swazi lineage,[41] and perhaps more widely, although in both these societies the process does not seem to have been as greatly developed as among the Ngoni. Among the Zulu and Swazi it led to a series of homesteads or villages corresponding to successive holders of the office of lineage head or king. Among the Ngoni not only was each

[41] cf. Holleman, 'Twee-eenheidsbeginsel van die Zulu' and 'Zulu *inigodi*'; Bryant, *Dictionary*, pp. 729*f*, s.v. *isizinda*; and Kuper, *African Aristocracy*, pp. 40*f*.

CHAPTER III

NGONI CULTURE

563 AMONG the mixed ethnic elements in the Ngoni kingdoms the ruling aristocracy were those whose ancestors were of Swazi and trans-Zambesi origin, and whose clan descent names established them as belonging to the true Ngoni group. The families with these clan names formed also 563 621 a social aristocracy in the villages where they lived, in the areas of the chiefs and *alumuzana*, and in the Ngoni kingdoms. This social status, established primarily by the clan name, was visible in the position of the huts in the village, arranged at the head of the kraal; in the leading role played by the senior members of these families on all ceremonial occasions; and in the practice of a number of customs which were defined as Ngoni. Ngoni culture, as seen in social and ritual life, was a series of 128 interwoven patterns of social organization and social behaviour. We shall outline these patterns here in order to bring together many of the forms and practices described in the rest of the book. In a more homogeneous society it would have been possible to find in these patterns a [184 consistent and clearly defined culture. Yet one of the main problems in studying Ngoni culture in the 1930's was that there were many variations 121] of each pattern and the anthropologist was all the time trying to find out what degree of cultural conformity existed among the Ngoni aristocracy. 563 Of the different aspects of culture reviewed in this chapter, the ritual pattern was the one most consistently followed, and it was the one in which the Ngoni social aristocracy most clearly demonstrated that they had a distinctive common culture which was found in both kingdoms and in the secession states.

(a) *Kinship pattern*

611 Like the South-eastern Bantu from whom they came the Ngoni were patrilineal in descent and inheritance. Marriage was negotiated by go-583 betweens and concluded through the handing over of cattle, and the term *lobola* was used for the cattle exchanged in this form of marriage. An Ngoni woman married by this form was known as *mlobokazi*. A 593 strict interpretation in the courts was given to this form of marriage as it affected the ownership and custody of the children. The children of [586] a *lobola* marriage contract belonged to their father and could be claimed by him if the marriage broke up, or on the death of their mother. 591 Traditionally, virilocal residence was an Ngoni custom, and it was sup-[592] ported by the house system whereby the male members of each house formed a group with economic interests in common through the joint ownership of the cattle in the name of the house. A widespread variant

2: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1956
FR5 Ngoni FR5

on virilocal residence will be discussed later and illustrated in Chapter IV of Part III.

(*b*) *Village pattern*

There was a traditional pattern of Ngoni village organization, which consisted in the siting of the huts in the village and the corresponding social groups formed in the different sections. Informants made it clear that when the Ngoni first settled in the areas where the two kingdoms now exist, the royal villages and the chiefs' villages were very large. Segmentation of these large villages, not only by the *lusungulu* 'going out' as already described, but also by sections of the village breaking off, began before the Europeans came and continued after their arrival. In the 1930's the traditional pattern was sometimes altered by a desire to build a 'model village' laid out in lines instead of in a horse-shoe curve round the kraal. Even in some of these model villages the grouping of huts, though no longer in a series of circles, indicated the house affiliation of their owners and their relationship to the head of the village.

The traditional ground-plan of an Ngoni village was based on the main kraal which occupied the centre. The gate of the kraal was on the open end of the horse-shoe formation, and the most important hut, the *indlunkulu*, was at the top of the kraal. On either side of the *indlunkulu* were grouped the huts belonging to the houses associated with the wives of the owner of the village. Behind the *indlunkulu* were the huts of his married sons and those of his brothers who chose to live with him, and this group of huts, known as *cigodlo*, spread round behind the main huts of the owners of houses. Behind each house-group of huts were the huts of the *induna* associated with the house; in large villages he often had a kraal and reproduced a similar small village plan in his own circle of huts. On the wings of the village, curving towards the gate of the kraal and called by the Ngoni 'the horns of the village', were the less important families in the village. The general principle of the village plan in terms of social status and the siting of huts was that the nearer huts were to the *indlunkulu* the higher was the prestige of their owner. The following very much simplified plan of an Ngoni village illustrates the principle of siting the huts in relation to social grouping, as it was when a new *lusungulu* village was set up. In this plan the *indlunkulu* hut was owned by the mother of the owner of the village, one of his father's widows who moved out with him. When she died the big wife on her right might move into the actual *indlunkulu* hut, or stay in her own hut while another widow of her father-in-law entered the *indlunkulu*. There was no invariable rule for this type of succession, but there were only these two possible alternatives. Reference should be made here to one other hut site—that of the *laweni* or boys' dormitory. It was usually sited behind either the big house or the *gogo* house, far enough behind

2: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1956
FR5 Ngoni FR5

group consisted of himself and the mother and her children, including her daughters only until they married.

The affinal element in a house consisted of the other wives associated with the owner of the house as co-wives, and the wives of the sons of the owner. Both the kinship group and the affinal group were bound together by their rights in the cattle of the herd which was known as 'the cattle of the house of X'. From that herd were taken cattle for the *lobola* of the wives married after the house was founded, and for the wives of the sons and adopted sons of the house. Into that herd came the cattle received for the marriages of the daughters belonging to the house and the gift cattle sent to wives by their fathers after marriage. When the *lobola* had been fully paid up for a daughter of the house, then her relationship with it ceased and she was thenceforth known as belonging to her husband's mother's house.

Associated with the house in the villages of the Paramounts, the chiefs and the leading *alumuzana* were two other groups of people. One was the *induna* appointed 'to take care of the house' and his family. In the 1930's the *induna* was in charge of the cattle and of the many activities connected with the house, including the organization of male labour in hut-building, in kraal construction and in cultivation; he was consulted by the male members of the house about the selling of cattle and the use of the goods accumulated in the house. The other group associated with the house in pre-European days consisted of captives taken in war and allocated to the house who worked as labourers. The servants who worked for a house in the 1930's assisted with cooking, beer-making and minding the children, and they had huts near that of the owner of the house to which they belonged, placed on the right- or left-hand side of the kraal according to their affiliation with the big house or the second house. Informants said that in the past such association with a house included giving a beast from the herd of the house for the marriage of a servant. The *induna*, through the marriage of his daughters, built up his own herd, which he frequently kept at first with the cattle of the house in the main kraal, later building his own kraal.

A new house began when a man married his big wife. Although at first he built her a hut at the back of his mother's hut in his father's village, as soon as he moved out to his new village after his father's death, the big wife's hut had the next most important site in the kraal after that of the *indhunkulu*, and the second wife had the third place of importance. In some of the larger villages of the central kingdom, the custom of moving out into a new village after the death of the former owner had been given up, partly because of pressure on the land. The house grouping in relation to the siting of huts then became very complex, but the pattern was nevertheless discernible. The two sections under the big house and the *gogo* house, which had formerly divided into two villages, continued to exist together, and at Mcakhatha this dual

2: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1956
FR5 Ngoni FR5

break up into smaller villages, and there were on the whole more villages in the north said to be *wabanja limodzi* (of one family) than among the central Ngoni. On the other hand, the *lusungulu* pattern of village division had almost disappeared among the central Ngoni.

A man on his first marriage built a hut for his wife behind his mother's hut, where his brothers by the same mother or by mothers of the same house also built. The family grouping by residence was therefore determined by house affiliation. Associated with this residential group based on kinship, there were the residences of the *induna* and his family which had separate alignments on a kinship basis, though for certain common purposes they combined with the family groups related to the house by kinship. The children of the families belonging to the house and the children of the *induna* who took care of it began to intermarry when the prohibitions on marriage within the village ceased to operate. In this way kinship bonds were created within a group which formerly had only residence and certain activities in common, and this process was recognizable in a number of the larger villages, especially in the central kingdom.

Within the different types of family groups determined by their residential basis there were certain outstanding relationships between members of the same family. The most important of these was that between father and children; the father, as the biological parent and also the symbol of authority, was the focus of honour and respect, and the one who helped his children when they were in need. The relation between the father and his children among the Ngoni was always a balance between affection and care, and respect and authority. The ideal pattern of a father, as described by informants, included all these elements and also wisdom. This concept of the father relationship was extended to the head of a *banja*, to the headman of a village or a section of a village, to a *mulumuzana* in charge of an area, to a chief, and to the Paramount himself. The Ngoni greeting to all older men, and the most respectful form of address to a man of any seniority, was *baba*, father, or its Nyanja equivalent *bambo*.

The mother, on the other hand, had a more limited relationship within the family circle. To her own children and to the children of her co-wives, especially of her house, she was the provider of food, and the affectionate 'cherisher'[1] of young children; but she was also treated with respect and, when she reached some seniority, she had considerable authority over her daughters and her younger co-wives. She could never compete, however, with the sisters of her husband or with his mothers, who expected to exercise authority over her children and to arrange for the ceremonies connected with birth, puberty, and marriage. In villages where virilocal residence was the rule, the husband's sisters were married elsewhere and were only present in the village during

[1] *Sadzwa*, lit. to cherish, is the word used for bringing up children.

2: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1956
FR5 Ngoni FR5

visits or on special occasions. In the central kingdom, where an important man's sisters often married in the village and stayed there, it was evident that they often exercised authority over their brother's children.

In polygynous Ngoni families the relationship between siblings was marked by strong attachment. Among the boys in the *laweni* brothers united to protect their younger brothers from other boys, and in the families of Swazi clans brothers showed many signs of youthful intolerance and arrogance towards boys of other clans, especially in matters concerning cattle and their herding. Sibling rivalry among boys was to a large extent controlled by two factors. One was the *laweni* system where the age-set principle predominated. The other was the division into the big house and *gogo* house, where the children of the *gogo* house knew that they stood in a different relationship to succession and authority in the village from their brothers and sisters in the big house. Within the big house itself, sons of the big wife knew that succession was regulated by seniority, and that the eldest son would expect to get priority when he married and it was necessary to allot cattle for *lobola*. The brother-sister link between children of the same mother was, as we have seen, a very close one, especially with the older sister of a man who was heir to a high position. This sister in her relation to his children carried almost the same authority as he did. Among sisters of the same family there was less apparent cohesion, except among very high-ranking Swazi clans where the girl children were looked after by special nursemaids and had their instruction in correct behaviour together from the older woman known as their *gogo*.

Ngoni grandparents on the paternal side showed little of the joking relationship with their grandchildren sometimes associated with this tie. When children went to visit their maternal grandparents in another village there was noticeably more ease between them and more indulgence was shown. In their father's village children were always aware that his parents were persons of standing and authority. Girls over six or seven often slept in their paternal grandmother's hut if she was a widow, and were aware that, though she showed kindliness in providing for their needs, she was a firm disciplinarian in all matters of behaviour.

Within the family group the male role of leadership was unquestioned. Honour and respect were a man's due from wives as well as from children. In difficult relations within his family, as in the case of divorce, he could count on counsel and support from his brothers, who were also ready to help him if cattle were needed for his own or his son's marriage or for payment of court penalties. This male circle of father and sons, father's brothers and their sons, was a closely knit group which functioned in regulating family affairs and in buying and selling cattle for the house to which they belonged. An obligation to help his sons was recognized by the father of a family and this obligation

3: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1960
FR5 Ngoni FR5

Military service, obedience to the law,
recognition of the Paramount's supremacy were therefore 182
the main traditional forces uniting the mixed populations in the kingdoms.

Ngoni society

Although all people living in the Ngoni kingdoms were 641
subjects of the Paramount, only those who could trace their descent from families who crossed the Zambezi River were recognized as 'true Ngoni'. Four main characteristics marked off this true Ngoni group from the rest. The first was their [614]
clan name, giving them an authentic origin south of the Zambezi. The second was a marriage contract sealed by [583]
handing over cattle, which established the offspring as 'children of their fathers', for, as they said, 'where the children are, the cattle are not'. The third was patrilineal [611]
descent and inheritance through the male line, and patri- [428]
local residence at marriage, so that the wife came as a [591]
'stranger' to her husband's people and village. The fourth was membership of a 'house', the social group of male [592]
members of Ngoni families with their wives and children round a leading woman. Everyone was born into a 'house' and the men remained in it for life, the women until their marriage. For special reasons children could be adopted [597]
into another house than the one into which they were born.

In a few of the smaller villages of North Nyasaland, con- 621
sisting of ten to fifteen huts, all the men were true Ngoni, 184
descendants of one or more former warriors in the same regiment, who had chosen to set up their own villages after [701]
the British had taken over the country. In such villages the cultural pattern of Ngoni life could be seen clearly, but they were not typical of the Ngoni kingdoms. There was always [563]
a mixture of peoples in the larger villages, dominated by a group of true Ngoni families.

This group of true Ngoni families were the social and 186
cultural aristocracy of these villages. They considered them- 563
selves superior to and distinct from the other ethnic elements 621

3: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1960
FR5 Ngoni FR5

III

'A New Stranger has come'

In these words the father's mother announced from the door of the hut that a child had been born. From inside the hut the women assisting the mother at the time of delivery had given a single cry if it was a boy and two cries for a girl. If the birth had been delayed till late afternoon towards sunset, the women in the hut said to the mother, if it was a boy: 'See the baby has been awaiting the return of the cattle, because it is he who will tend the cattle.'

The new baby was at first regarded as a stranger, born by a woman who had herself come to the village as a stranger when she married. In later years, when speaking of his parents, the child would say: 'X is my father, and I am of the womb of A, and G and H they are my brother and my sister of one womb.' This particularization of a full brother and sister was used to correct the extended use of the kinship terms, and also to convey the idea that having been born from the womb of one woman gave children a special relationship important in Ngoni thinking.

Preparation for birth

When an Ngoni wife was aware that she was pregnant she did not say anything to her husband, and indeed endeavoured to conceal her condition from him as long as possible, continuing the normal sleeping arrangements and intercourse. Ngoni women liked to assert their authority and ascendancy on those occasions, and therefore excluded the men from knowledge of the coming event and from all preparations for it. The senior women used to say, 'Men are

591 184 844 Changes in residence at and after marriage influenced the composition of the group of relatives who assisted at births. In the central kingdom daughters of leading men in the village often stayed in their father's village at marriage. Hence the father's sisters were often present at the birth and the wife's mother and her sisters might be living in the village. If the [614] wife belonged to a higher ranking Ngoni clan than her husband, her relatives shared responsibility with those of the husband's family.

177 844 [759] As may be imagined the struggle between mother-in-law control and western medical practices at childbirth was a protracted one. Even when there was a younger member of the husband's family trained as a nurse or midwife, she by no means had her way in organizing the conduct of the birth. She might introduce a few hygienic measures such as clean cloths instead of old rags, and sterilized thread for tying the cord. But unless the senior women were frightened, and they seldom were, by prolonged and difficult labour, the Ngoni families were averse to taking a young mother into hospital. [606] The chief reason was the challenge to the authority of the mother-in-law, especially when the younger women who had some knowledge of western medical practices questioned the advice of the senior women.

3: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1960
FR5 Ngoni FR5

or thirteen, the girls began to take part in *ngoma* dances with the boys. This was on a village basis and organized with a view to competition with other villages. In practising such dancing, as we shall see later, the girls were often by themselves, though when getting ready for a competition they joined with the boys' group.

The Ngoni girls' circle was to some extent split into the households to which the girls belonged. There was no common residence or common eating-place for all the group, to correspond with the boys' dormitory and eating together at the kraal gate. Generally the girls continued to eat in their mothers' compound with their own younger brothers and sisters. They sometimes ate with the widowed aunt or grandmother with whom they slept, but the other practice was more common. This meant that Ngoni girls who bore the clan name of their father continued to live in the compound of their mother who might not be of a high-ranking Ngoni clan. In such cases the grandmother and the father's elder sister kept a sharp eye on the training and deportment of the girl.

The Ngoni girls' circle was an exclusive group. Unlike the dormitory where all village boys mixed up, the Ngoni girls, in virtue of bearing their father's clan name, tended to remain as a distinctive group. They were members of their father's house until they married; and when that took place it was they who could cause cattle to flow into the herd belonging to that house. It was partly for this reason, the transfer of cattle, that the Ngoni women of that house, particularly the grandmother, watched closely the bringing up of the girls from the second teeth stage onward. If she thought the training of the girl was unsatisfactory, because of the carelessness or doubtful character of the girl's own mother, the grandmother might discuss with the girl's father the advisability of arranging for the girl to be adopted into another household or into a collateral house. The reason for this was that when marriage negotiations began and the prospective parents-in-law made inquiries about the girl's character and

3: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1960
FR5 Ngoni FR5

behaviour especially to elders, and to enforce by dramatic and sometimes brutal means a submissive attitude towards authority. That objective, as we have seen, was carried out by the Ngoni throughout their training of their children, from the earliest age upwards. They were half amused and half scandalized at the idea that young people had to be put in a camp in the bush in order to teach them how to behave.

Cultural changes in the assumption of adult roles

It is necessary to look back for a moment to the Ngoni past in order to see how changed external conditions in Nyasaland had altered the sequences and the timing of the process by which youths and young girls were recognized as adults. The stages of arriving at social maturity had been speeded up by cultural changes. In the days of warfare the senior herd-boys, from about twenty years of age, were called up at irregular intervals to form a new regiment. From this time they were known as 'young men' or 'youths', and they fought in the tribal wars for five years. In the off-season, during the rains when raids were not carried out, they were called to clear and cultivate the gardens of the Paramount and chiefs, and to help build houses and fence cattle kraals. At approximately the age of twenty-six to twenty-eight they were ordered to take the head-ring, the form of dressing the hair which formerly marked a married Ngoni man, and they were told they could marry and retire from the army. The older Ngoni declared that young men were not allowed to sleep with girls at all until they joined the army. Even then the relationship had to be initiated by the girl expressing her preference for a lover, and then sex relations were limited to partial intercourse. It was at marriage, after having been given the head-ring, that Ngoni youths were called 'men'. They moved out of the dormitory and built a hut for their wives in the area behind the huts belonging to their father's house. The cattle handed over on their marriage to the bride's family were taken from the herd belonging to that house.

3: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1960
FR5 Ngoni FR5

APPENDIX

HOUSE, HUT, HOUSEHOLD, house is used in this book for the Ngoni system of grouping round the leading women who were wives or mothers of the head of the village. Hut is used for the actual building. Household is used for a group of huts within a compound, (See diagrams in Chapter IV. See also Ngoni of Nyasaland page 122).

PATRILOCAL), refers to residence of young couple after marriage

MATRILOCAL), —sometimes called virilocal and uxorilocal.

CLASSIFICATORY KINSHIP TERMS, extension of use of father, mother, brother, sister etc. to wide range of relatives.

PARALLEL COUSINS, children of father's brothers or mother's sisters—regarded as brothers and sisters and called such.

CROSS COUSINS, children of father's sisters or mother's brothers—with whom marriage was possible.

AGE-SETS, the special Ngoni terms are given in 'Ngoni of Nyasaland' page 144.

all children: *abantwana*

young men: *amajaha*

young girls before puberty: *inkakazana*

young girls after puberty: *izintombi*

III

VERNACULAR TERMS

AKULU	the important people
ALEZI	nursemaids
GOGO	grandparent or any very senior person
HLONIPA	respect
INDLUNKULU	chief hut in a village
INDUNA	official in village
IZIDANDANI	girl attendants
LAWENI	boys' dormitory
MWINI	owner—of a hut, cattle, dance group

4: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)1951 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

new wife to replace the divorced woman. Divorce however seems to have been rare, and in the genealogies I collected I met with only one instance of divorce at this period.

3. *Payments and ceremonies*

Betrothal[10] was a preliminary to marriage but was not compulsory. A girl was betrothed only if she was sought in marriage before puberty and the marriage then did not take place until some years after puberty. If a girl passed puberty without being betrothed she was subsequently married without a betrothal period. A man was expected to make presents to the girl he had betrothed and he began to adopt avoidance relationships towards her parents. If after puberty the girl or her parents wished to break off the engagement they could do so but were then under an obligation to return the man's presents. The ceremony at which an aristocratic girl after puberty chose her own husband has been described by Wiese.[11]

In the marriage itself there are two main stages marked by two distinct transfers of cattle. The first transfer was called 'snuff-box', *mfuko*. The name of the payment is based on the practice of begging snuff from one's friends and acquaintances and indicates something trifling and not recoverable. It consisted of one beast. Payment of 'snuff-box' established the man's rights to bring an action against an adulterer but it did not give him the right to take his wife away to his own village nor to the custody of any children she might bear him. These rights were obtained only by the payment of bride-wealth, *malowolo*,[12] which consisted of from one to a dozen beasts depending on the status of the woman's father. Both payments, 'snuff-box' and bridewealth, were made by the man or, if he was a young man, by his father to his wife's father. No specifically defined relatives were obliged to help a man find his marriage cattle but a man with few cattle of his own looked for assistance to the head of his cluster. Similarly there were no definite rules of distribution of the marriage cattle among the woman's relatives and the matter

[10] The verb is *ku-homeka* for a man, and the passive *ku-homekewa* for a woman. Cf. Bemba *uku-kobeka* and *uku-kobekwa* in Richards, *Bemba Marriage and Present Economic Conditions* (Rhodes-Livingstone Papers, No. Four), p. 61.

[11] In his later paper he calls the ceremony *inyamuale*. In the earlier paper he calls the ceremony held at first menstruation *inhamuale* and says that after this ceremony the girl went with others to choose the man she liked. The vernacular words he mentions are presumably connected with the modern Nyanja *cinamwali*, which is now sometimes applied to three ceremonies held (1) at first menstruation, (2) six months later, *cinamwali caciwaya*, and (3) after first pregnancy, *cinamwali cacikulu*. The abstract noun *unamwali* is sometimes used in place of the concrete *cinamwali*. Cf. Wiese, op. cit., 'Expediçao . . .', p. 473, and 'Geschichte . . .', p. 191; Rattray, op. cit. pp. 102 and 190; Stigand, 'Notes on the natives of Nyasaland, N.E. Rhodesia, and Portuguese Zambezia, their arts, customs and modes of subsistence', *JRAI*, xxxvii (1907), p. 121; Read, 'Tradition and prestige among the Ngoni', *Africa*, ix (1936), p. 472; Young and Banda, *Our African Way of Life*, pp. 22-4.

[12] Cf. the Zulu verb *uku-lobola*; also Rattray, op. cit. p. 199.

4: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)1951 FR5 Ngoni FR5
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Wiese suggests that the woman only gradually transferred her place of residence from her father's village to that of her husband.[19] If the husband and wife quarrelled, the woman ran away to her father's village for protection, and had to be persuaded to return by her husband. It is difficult to find out if there was any obligation on the man to labour for his father-in-law. Such an obligation exists to-day, but informants like to maintain that in the past the Ngoni never troubled themselves with agriculture, but lived entirely on beer, meat, and raided crops. But we know from contemporary writers that they did have gardens, although they may perhaps have been cultivated only by recent captives and by women.

An important obligation on the man was to avoid his wife's mother. He did not speak to her, went off into the bush if he met her on a path, and did not pass in front of her hut. With his father-in-law he was formal and reserved, but he did speak to him. These patterns were established at betrothal, and with the passage of years were gradually set aside. The final ceremony in which the man ate with his mother-in-law was the social recognition of his successful performance of the role of son-in-law and of husband to their daughter. Even after this ceremony he could not sit on the same mat as his mother-in-law. The position of the woman in respect to her parents-in-law was much easier, and she did not avoid them or their hut.

As a result of these formal and informal modes of interaction between the man's group and the woman's group, links of affinity were established which cut across the residential system, with its chains of authority and responsibility, superordination and subordination. The common interest of persons bound together by these links was the success of the marriage, and the well-being of the children. A quarrel between a man and his wife led to processes of discussion, deliberation and conciliation involving the two groups. The children of the marriage grew up knowing not only where they belonged politically, but also where they were welcome as sister's sons and daughter's sons. Some children were sent to the father's mother to be reared, some to the mother's mother. The pregnancies of the woman were reported to her own relatives as well as to her husband's.

It is impossible to tell to what extent people consciously planned their marriages and the marriages of their children with the object of ramifying their affinal ties. But we do know that a wife who had been brought from a long way off was regarded more highly than one who came from the same village as her husband, and that a woman who married her cross-cousin was, other things being equal, lower in status than her husband's unrelated other wives. These gradations in status suggest that the value of a marriage which established a link between a man and some hitherto unconnected

[19] Wiese, op. cit. 'Expediçao . . .', p. 473, and 'Geschichte . . .', pp. 191-2.

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segment of the residential system was recognized and institutionalized. Furthermore, it is in line with this thesis that, in arranging the marriage of recent captives, no great attention was paid to the establishment of farflung affinal links. Frequently a man and a woman who had been allocated to the same captor, and whom they both addressed as 'father', married one another on his instructions. Payments made in these marriages were small or non-existent. Recent captives were too low in the hierarchical structure to be concerned about reinforcing their position by horizontal ties. Their ambitions were directed to securing promotion by becoming lieutenants of their captors.

5. Autonomy of marriage

The pattern of segmentation of the residential system was continually changing. In part this was due to proliferation downwards, that is, by the process of increasing segmentation between brothers and between fathers' sons. In addition to this process political promotion and death in war altered the relative position of the segments associated with particular people. Marriage itself was a social process which, in so far as the relationship between man and wife was concerned, did not react directly on the residential system. This system was based on patrilineal descent and patrilocal residence and the movements of women, except at the level of the queens, were from one point of view irrelevant to the system. It was the grouping of children round their mother, in contrast to their father's children by other wives, which related the marriages of one generation to the patterns of segmentation of the next. A woman with no children in her house, whether her status was high or low, was structurally irrelevant to the residential system.

Marriage was also largely independent of the central government. Warfare, not domesticity, was the right and proper occupation of young men, and the age at which men married for the first time was probably about thirty. Informants all stressed that in the old days first marriage took place at later ages for both men and women than it does now. Wiese implies that girls were married any time after puberty,[30] but my informants stated that girls did not usually marry until they were aged about twenty to twenty-five. Men and women were organized into parallel age-sets, usually referred to as regiments, and corresponding regiments used to dance and frolic together. Sometimes a man took a wife from the regiment corresponding to his own, but there does not seem to have been any positive obligation to do so. Particular regiments were not prevented from marrying, as among the Zulu, and all the tales of the Paramount Chief intervening in the affairs of warriors are phrased in terms of the chief instructing a laggard to find himself a wife when all his age mates had already married. The chief did however interfere

[30] Wiese, op. cit. 'Expediçao . . .', p. 473, and 'Geschichte . . .', p. 191.

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her pro-husband. If there was no younger brother the pro-husband was one of her husband's junior patrilineal kinsmen of his own generation. She could not refuse a pro-husband although her husband's brothers could choose not to provide her with a pro-husband if they so wished. The widow continued to live in her own cluster where her pro-husband came to visit her. Rattray states that widows waited one year after their husband's death before their re-marriage was settled[23] and this is nowadays the traditional procedure. Wiese, however, writes that widows waited four years before they could marry again.[24] The children begotten by the pro-husband were regarded as children of the dead man for social purposes but the identity of their genitor was not disguised. They called him *father*, but this was as much because he was their dead pater's brother and their mother's pro-husband as because he was their genitor.

The same principle of substitution was applied to betrothal. If a man died before marrying a girl to whom he was betrothed, the betrothal passed to a younger brother or a classificatory brother. If a girl died before marrying the man to whom she was betrothed, the betrothal passed to a younger sister. Unlike the operation of the levirate, however, the children of this type of marriage were regarded as the children of their genitor and genetrix for all purposes, as though their parents had been betrothed to each other in the first place. Again, unlike the levirate, if a man considered himself too old when his betrothed became marriageable he might give her instead to his son as a wife. The children of this marriage were also regarded for all purposes as the children of their genitor and genetrix.

Occasionally a woman whose husband died young, went to live with a man who was not her dead husband's brother, real or classificatory. The pro-husband gave a goat to the woman, but if bride-wealth had been offered for her by her first husband, the pro-husband could never gain permanent custody of the children. The children that she bore by him belonged to the segment of the dead man, took his descent name, and when old enough went to live in his segment. When the dead man's kinsmen claimed these children, they gave a beast to their genitor 'to straighten his back', that is, for his labour in begetting them. This arrangement is in some ways analagous to Nuer widow-concubinage[25] but with the important difference that the pro-husband, although not a kinsman of the dead man, had rights in the widow as a wife and an exclusive right to her sexual services. It seems that the status of a widow living in this kind of union was not low. In one instance I heard of, very aristocratic families were involved, and the arrangement appears to have been

[23] Rattray, op. cit., p. 97.
[24] Wiese, op. cit. 'Expediçao . . .', p. 474, and 'Geschichte . . .', p. 192.
[25] Cf. Evans-Pritchard, *Some Aspects of Marriage and Family Among the Nuer* (Rhodes-Livingstone Papers, No. Eleven), p. 18.

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cousins. Whether a man decides to marry a cross-cousin or an unrelated woman, he still has to decide just exactly whom he will try to marry, and similarly a woman has also to make up her own mind about whom she will accept as husband. The initiative in choosing lies very largely with the couple themselves, and not with their parents and kinsmen. If a man is diffident about asking a woman to marry him, he may ask his father or elder brother to seek out a woman for him, or a woman may have a spouse presented to

Table IV. Marital status of females, by age, 1948-9

Age in years	Marital status								Total
	Unwedded	Wedded							
		Divorced women living alone	Widows living alone	Divorced woman living as concubine	Married women			Total wedded women	
					HH	HA	HS		
0–4	58	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	58
5–9	65	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	65
10–14	54	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	54
15–19	20	–	1	–	14	9	1	25	45
20–24	–	3	–	–	10	11	–	24	24
25–29	–	1	–	1	17	8	1	29	29
30–34	1	–	–	–	14	8	–	22	23
35–39	–	–	–	–	19	3	1	23	23
40–44	–	2	1	–	13	1	1	18	18
45–49	–	–	2	–	13	2	–	17	17
50–54	–	3	–	–	7	3	1	14	14
55–59	–	1	5	–	6	–	1	13	13
60–64	–	1	8	–	3	1	1	15	15
65–69	–	2	8	–	1	–	–	11	11
70–74	–	–	5	–	1	–	–	6	6
75–79	–	1	–	–	–	–	–	1	1
80–84	–	–	1	–	–	–	–	1	1
Not known	–	–	–	–	4	–	–	4	4
Total	198	14	31	1	122	46	7	223	421

Legend

HH (Husband at Home)	Husband living within thirty miles of his wife, in a village, and not separated from her
HA (Husband Away)	Husband living permanently on a farm, or in Fort Jameson, or more than thirty miles away
HS (Husband Separated)	Husband living within thirty miles, in a village, but separated from his wife

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593 brew beer when her husband asks her. In addition to this minimal amount of required co-operation, in many instances husband and wife have a great deal in common. They may go to church or visit a relative, or even go together to a beer party.

The obligation on a man to clothe his wife is the most clear-cut and obvious duty in marriage. It is the failure to clothe that is [586] usually cited as evidence of desertion when a woman seeks a divorce. There is no specific standard to which he must clothe her, but she usually insists that she is not to be more poorly clad than are her 291 neighbours. Clothes consisted in the old days of skins and barkcloth, [177] but cloth was introduced by Arabs before the Europeans arrived, and was used as a form of currency by the early European settlers. A few people still wear skins, but only on top of Western clothing. [286] There is no indigenous weaving, and all clothes have therefore to be bought in the shops.

342 The man takes the initiative in finding a hut in which he and his 356 wife live, and it is he who undertakes the major work of repair. 462 Houses, if made of bamboo, last for about twenty years, but require rethatching, while pole and mud huts last about eight years only. When a couple begin to live together they usually borrow an empty hut in the village, asking the man or woman who is looking after the hut if they can move in. No charge can be made for the loan of a ● [591] hut. If the marriage begins uxorilocally, and the woman has previously been living in a dormitory, she may ask the other girls in the dormitory to go and sleep elsewhere until her husband can build her a hut of her own. The man does the work of marking out the site, digging the foundations, cutting the trees for the framework, and so on. All these are men's jobs, and he may be assisted in the work by his male neighbours and relatives. His wife gathers thatching grass, but the men do the actual thatching. The finishing of the house is entirely the wife's work, and she usually gets her friends and relatives to help her plaster the walls and floor. The maintenance of the plaster remains her responsibility and she ought to renew the floor every month after she has menstruated.

593 Every wife ought to have her own garden, and, sooner or later, 423 her own storehouse. Most young people acquire gardens of their 291 own long before they marry, but continue to pool the produce of the [343] garden with the adult responsible for feeding them. This arrangement continues after marriage, and the incoming spouse at first merely assists in the garden of the other and is fed from the common storehouse of his or her parents or relatives. If a woman has been 591 living with her grandmother and her husband comes to live with her, 291 the couple draw on the wife's grandmother's storehouse for their food, 343 and place the produce of the wife's garden in it. Similarly, in virilocal marriage, a woman may at first help in her husband's garden and draw from his mother's storehouse. But after a year or two, if a man is not to be despised as a sluggard, he must build a storehouse in the village where they have settled, and see that there is

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an adequate garden for his wife. He may clear a fresh garden on rejuvenated land, or enlarge his own or his wife's garden, depending on how they are placed. It is usually not until much later in the marriage that a man starts a garden of his own, distinct from the one nominally owned by his wife. The work of clearing a new place for a garden is not, among the Ngoni, necessarily a man's job, and can be undertaken by a woman alone if she has no man to assist her. If the husband is present, he does most of the tree felling, and his wife breaks up the new ground with her hoe.

The planting, weeding, and cultivating are all done by both men and women, and during the wet season a man goes to the garden with his wife early in the morning and they both work there until they are tired. Later, when the growing crop has to be protected against monkeys by day and wild pigs by night, they both spend long hours on watch in the garden shelter. At harvest, both cut down the maize and lift the ground crops, but only the woman can carry the produce to the village. If the man helps, it is by bringing a cart or sledge and taking home a large load pulled by oxen.

In the other subsistence pursuits of animal husbandry and hunting, there is no co-operation between husband and wife until the animals have been killed, when the woman has to cook the meat. Hunting is entirely a male occupation, and animal husbandry largely so. If a man goes away on a journey, he leaves his cattle in charge of his son or brother or father rather than with his wife. If there is no trustworthy man available, then they become his wife's responsibility, but all she in fact does is to see that the senior herdboy reports to her every evening about the state of the beasts. Small stock such as goats and sheep and pigs may be looked after entirely by the wife, and chickens are likely to be in her care.

A man looks to his wife to feed him, and it is considered a reflection on her industry if he does not get enough and has to hang about when his companions are eating in the hope that they will invite him to join them. She feeds him within the exigencies of the food-supply, which often involves semi-starvation in February and March. She is expected to cook competently, and if a woman continually burns the porridge which forms the basis of every meal, there will be strife between her and her husband. If she proves to be a really bad cook her husband may send her home again to be taught properly.

Beer-brewing is the work of women, and is a process lasting at least six days even after all the correct ingredients have been mustered. There is some variation with status in the extent to which husbands require their wives to brew beer, and it is in any case a matter in which the woman can take the initiative. Important men and chiefs who have many visitors like to be able to offer beer to their guests, so that queens spend much time brewing. But common men need to conserve their food supplies more carefully, and know that their visitors will be disappointed but not surprised if there is no beer. A woman sometimes brews to sell the beer and gain money to buy herself clothes, if her husband has no money to give her.

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595 polygyny, and punish their members who take additional wives,
794 there are still a number of Christian polygynists who for most purposes align themselves with the Christian group.

As in the old days, the wives of a polygynist are ranked in the
595 chronological order of marriage, the first wife married being the
178 great wife. If, however, bridewealth has been paid, the wives married
[583] in this way are all senior to those who are married without it. The arrangement by which a barren or aged wife was given a linked co-wife (*nshanzi*) has now almost disappeared. A young girl may still be indicated as a linked co-wife designate at the gall bladder ceremony of her kinswoman and the intestines placed round her neck, but this is now a mere ceremonial, and the girl marries elsewhere when she grows up. As mentioned above a chief negotiated recently for a linked co-wife on the strength of bridewealth paid by his father, but with no success.

593 A man makes his headquarters in his great wife's hut, and keeps
595 his possessions and money in it. During the day it is considered proper that he should sit and chat or entertain visitors on the verandah of her hut. Her hut is likely to be of better design than those of her co-wives, and she is more likely than they to have a separate kitchen. When her husband returns from a journey, he ought to go first to her hut, and if he has brought back goods from Southern Rhodesia, it is in her house that he stores his loads until he has time to divide them among his wives and relatives. A visitor from afar goes first to the great wife's hut and there asks for the man he is seeking. In her husband's absence it is she who must entertain the visitor. This pattern of precedence is followed to greater or lesser extent despite quarrels between husband and wife, and is not affected by where the husband actually sleeps at night.

Apart from this emphasis on the importance of the great wife, the
595 correct behaviour for a man with many wives is impartiality. He must sleep with each wife in rotation, usually for a week at a time, and must not confide in one wife the secrets of his relationship to another. Relationships between co-wives are sometimes strained, and one may use medicines against the others. The medicine[88]
[830] believed to prevent a man from achieving erection with anyone other than the woman who gives it to him is sometimes used by one wife against another. On the other hand, some co-wives help each other in their gardens and many polygynists' households run smoothly. Each wife has her own hut and her own garden and it is possible for them to arrange their affairs so that they can co-operate or act separately as they find best. If they persistently quarrel
[591] their husband may deem it well for them to live in separate villages, so that for example a man may live virilocally with his great wife and uxorilocally with his second wife, going from one village to the

[88] Possibly known as *ndamanga*. The details of this medicine are not known by many men, and I was unable to question any women on this matter.

[P.58]

CHAPTER IV

KINSFOLK, AFFINES AND NEIGHBOURS

1. The setting of marriage

[581 602] WHEN a man marries he acquires not only a wife but also affinal relatives. His kinsfolk become her affines and both groups of relatives become kin of the children of the marriage. Husband and wife do not exist in isolation but are the centre of a network of relationships by which one group is articulated with the other. The common interest of the two groups is in the well-being of the couple and of the family which they found. This is true of all societies but among the Ngoni the relatives of a married couple play a more important part in the marriage than they do, for example, in Western society. The importance of the kin is increased by the custom of sending children away to live with their grandparents as soon as they have been weaned, and by the fact that husband and [591] wife do not set up their residence entirely on their own but follow their relatives and live in close proximity to one or more of them. We have said that in the old days the elementary family did not emerge as an important grouping in society. This proposition is still true to-day, although our grounds for making it have shifted somewhat. In the towns the old pattern of kinship cannot operate and husband [594] and wife live their lives much more as an isolated pair, cut off from their kin and alone responsible for their children. But in villages neighbours are kinsmen and a quarrel between man and wife brings kinsfolk from all around seeking to establish the rights and wrongs of the quarrel and to effect reconciliation. Many children are not sent to live with their grandparents, but even they grow up with their [855] age-mates in the village, are fed by many different women, sleep in different huts, and visit to and fro with their relatives in other villages. The difficulties of rearing children in the towns have led to the rise of a new pattern in which children born in Southern Rhodesia are brought back hundreds of miles to the village to be cared for by rural kinsfolk. The quarrels of spouses in the towns are referred home to the village for discussion.

It is the kinsfolk of the pair who are most directly concerned with their marriage, but there are other persons and groups who are also interested. In the village the headman and his lieutenants, even if they are not close kinsmen of one of the spouses, have an interest in the good behaviour of the couple, and they too may intervene in a quarrel. They participate in the ceremonials of marriage, and may receive part of the meat and beer given by one side to the other. CDD Beyond the village the Native Courts deal to a great extent with

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married women chosen for them by their kinsfolk while they were away during the 1939-45 war. If the woman selected for him by one relative is unsatisfactory, a man may turn to another relative for help, as is shown in the following incident.

Case history 5

Ahab, a young man of about twenty, was working in Fort Jameson. He wrote to his father in the village enclosing money for the legalization payment, asking that his father should find him a wife. His father spoke to a friend living in another village who had an unmarried daughter. The friend agreed that his daughter should marry Ahab, but the girl said that she wanted to see Ahab before making up her mind about him. Ahab was told of the arrangement but refused to agree to it, saying that he knew that the girl chosen was a prostitute.

Ahab then asked a classificatory grandmother to find him a wife. This woman found a girl and when Ahab came home from work he and a friend went for a walk to the girl's village to spy her out. The friend, on seeing the girl, advised Ahab against marrying her and the negotiations again fell through.

Ahab asked his grandmother to try again and this time he approved of the girl selected. The legalization payment was made and the girl came to live in Ahab's village with his grandmother. After a week or so, she was taken by the grandmother and other important women of the village into the township to start living with Ahab.

On the other hand a man may desist from marrying the girl of his choice in the face of parental opposition. For example, the first girl that Amos found for himself was opposed by his father because her father was a sorcerer; the second on the ground that her parents were unreliable and that she was a cross-cousin, a point against her in that Amos's brother had married a cross-cousin and the marriage was not a success; only with the third choice did the father agree to his marriage.

The initiative in arranging a marriage lies with the man and his kin rather than with the woman, and a girl who goes too much out of her way to attract a husband risks her reputation and may be regarded as a potential prostitute. On elopement, it is the woman who runs off to the man's village or to his place of work, and it might be expected that her relatives would initiate action to bring her back or to claim damages for abduction. Sometimes a man does take action against the lover with whom his daughter has run away, and the lover pays a beast. Another man, however, may take no steps to follow his runaway daughter, merely refusing to recognize the existence of any marriage between her and her lover, and sometimes denying any knowledge of the lover's name. If the woman shows no sign of returning to her own village, efforts may be made to bring her children back to her parents to be brought up. Sometimes a man who has eloped with a woman later approaches her parents, apologizes for his precipitate action and makes them gifts, after which they may decide to recognize him as a son-in-law.

If a man shows his intention of marrying despite the disapproval of his close kin, they can retaliate by not helping him financially,

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584 or friends. If the man is away working or in the Army he may make his proposal by letter. When agreement has been reached negotiations can proceed although they are carried on as if there had been no prior agreement and the proposal was entirely a new one.

A man tells his eldest brother of his intention to marry, or, if he is the eldest son, he may approach his father direct. He does not [593] speak to his mother about this matter, for a man does not confide in his mother about anything connected with sex, but she is told [603] of his intention by her husband. A man ought to tell his grandmother at an early stage, particularly the grandmother who reared him. A woman tells her sisters and her grandmother, and her eldest sister will tell her eldest brother. The man's father or eldest brother may decide on who shall act as intermediaries in the matchmaking, or else the man may himself ask important people in the village to act. There is no definite rule as to who they should be, and either men or women or both may make up the party. Usually two or three people go, and a man will try and choose people who are reliable and sober and tactful. Marriage intermediaries do not have the same important responsibilities for the marriage as do the marriage [191] sureties (or witnesses) among the Nyanja and Yao although they are known by the same term.[3] The intermediaries go to the woman's village and consult her senior relatives. Traditionally they should go to the woman's grandmother, either her father's mother or her mother's mother, depending on who lives in the village and who is the more important. They tell her that they have heard that such-and-such a marriage has been contemplated. The girl's grandmother tells the girl's father that the intermediaries have come, and if nothing has arisen to jeopardize the marriage, the visiting party are told that all is well and that they must come back again. They return to their own village, and the next day, or the next week if it is a long way to walk, they go again, bringing with them a gift or sometimes the legalization payment. The gift or money is handed to the [583] person leading the negotiations on the woman's side who passes it on to the woman's father. Arrangements are made about the gall bladder ceremony and a date fixed. The intermediaries then go back to their village.

585 At the gall bladder ceremony the bride receives formal advice [591] from her affines and the people in their village. Shortly afterwards she begins to live with her husband in either his or her village. If they live virilocally she does not at first cook for her husband, but the couple rely on food prepared by his other wives or his mother or [593] grandmother. It may be up to a year later that the woman first cooks for her husband and husband's father, the latter commenting on her cooking. When she first becomes pregnant she is anointed 843 by her husband's grandmother, and goes with a young girl from her husband's kinsfolk to announce her pregnancy to her own kin.

[3] *Nkhoswe.*

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see them and to a large extent participate in them, joining in the dancing and drinking, giving presents and advice to the bride, and so on. Less spectacular are the continual patterns of interaction between a man and his affines arising from his partial dependence on them and his obligations towards them as expressed in everyday life. A man must avoid his mother-in-law and help his father-in-law with garden work, and if he is living uxorilocally he may be dependent on his affines for food and housing. If they move from one village to another he moves with them.

Avoidance is most marked between a man and his wife's mother. He must not speak to her, sit near her, pass in front of or enter her hut, and he should endeavour not to meet her on the path. Above all he must never sit on her mat, for sitting on a woman's mat is regarded as symbolically equivalent to sleeping with her. To a lesser extent a man must avoid his father-in-law, but it is not considered amiss for a man to sit at one end of a verandah while his father-in-law sits at the other. They can talk to each other if necessary. A woman is comparatively free with her parents-in-law and does not avoid their hut. The formalities of relationship between a man and his parents-in-law begin when he starts to negotiate his marriage, or earlier if their daughter is betrothed to him while she is still a child. With the passage of time a man avoids his mother-in-law less, and after the ceremony of entering her hut he can sit and chat to her. Even then it is still considered shameful for him to sit on her mat.

The Ngoni regard uxorilocal residence as part of the obligation a man has towards his wife's parents. Many couples spend their whole married life virilocally and others live permanently in uxorilocal marriage, but in describing where a couple ought to live, Ngoni speak always in virilocal terms. We have seen that in the old days virilocal residence was the rule but that a man might live uxorilocally for a while at the beginning of his first marriage after paying 'snuff-box' until he paid bridewealth (p. 5). The Cewa lived uxorilocally, but it was possible for a Cewa man to make a small payment some years after marriage permitting him to take his wife to his own village. Nowadays among the Ngoni some men, but not all, begin their marriages uxorilocally. A man may do so either because he finds it more convenient, due to lack of suitable accommodation in his own village, quarrels with his kin or shortage of food, or else because he is made to do so by his parents-in-law. A parent who does not approve of his (or her) daughter's suitor may accept the young man on condition that the couple live under his eye for a while so that he can assure himself that his daughter will be well treated by her husband. Sometimes it is said that a man who has not yet made the legalization payment must live uxorilocally until he can find the money, but this is not always done and some couples whose marriages are only 'poorly fixed' live virilocally.

The proportion of couples who live virilocally varies from one village to another.

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village to another. An indication of the relative frequency with which different types of marriage residence occur is given by Table XIII. This table is based on all the extant marriages involving the 98 married men whose wives were known and the 175 married women, as shown in Tables III and IV. A distinction is made in Table XIII between those marriages in which the man lived with his wife or in a village near her and those in which the man was effectively absent.

We may now assess the relative frequency of virilocal and uxorilocal residence by extracting those marriages falling into either one or other of these residential categories and by then dividing the number of virilocal contracts by the number of uxorilocal. This is done in Table XIV.

It will be seen that although there were three marriages in which both spouses lived virilocally for every one in which they both lived uxorilocally, this preponderance of virilocality was reversed in those marriages in which the man was absent. There were approximately three wives who lived uxorilocally while their husbands were away for every two who lived virilocally. This difference between the ratios in the two parts of the sample is not likely to have arisen as a chance result and may be regarded as definitely associated with the whereabouts of the husband.

On the basis of these figures we may continue to call the Ngoni a virilocal rather than an uxorilocal people, but it is evident from the last column of Table XIII that virilocal marriages amount to slightly less than half (47·3 per cent) of all extant marriages. It should also be remembered that by no means all of the couples we have classified as virilocal were living in the village of the man's father. We have included in this category all marriages in which the man had definitely stronger ties to the other inhabitants of their village than had his wife. Our definition of the uxorilocal category is similar and not all uxorilocal couples were living in the woman's mother's village.[8] A more detailed examination of the frequencies with which these different kinds of marriage residence occur will be attempted elsewhere.

We have already noted that a man who goes to live in the village of his bride takes on the care of her garden and works in it with her. The produce of the garden is pooled with whoever was looking after the bride, and the young couple draw their food from this common store.[9] A man who does not intend to stay long in his wife's village will usually try to keep his own garden under cultivation near his own village and when he takes his wife back to his village he reverts to his own garden as his main source of supply. If the two villages are a long way apart this may not be practicable, or the man may find it irksome to keep two gardens going, and may lend his own to someone else on the understanding that he will be wanting it back

[8] See below, pp. 75f.
[9] See above, p. 42.

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Table XIII. Residence of husband and wife, 1948-9

Wife's residence	Husband's residence		Total
	Rural	Away	
Intra-village	22·8% (31)	26% (12)	23·6% (43)
Virilocal	52·9% (72)	30% (14)	47·3% (86)
Uxorilocal	17·6% (24)	43% (20)	24·2% (44)
Neither related ..	1·5% (2)	0% (0)	1·1% (2)
Separated	5·1% (7)	—	3·8% (7)
Total	100·0% (136)	100% (46)	100·0% (182)

Legend

Rural	Husband living in a village within thirty miles of his wife, either permanently or part-time.
Away	Husband living permanently on a farm, in Fort Jameson township or more than thirty miles away from his wife.
Intra-village	Wife living in a village to which both she and her husband belong.
Virilocal	Wife living in her husband's village which is not her own village.
Uxorilocal	Wife living in her own village which is not her husband's village.
Neither related	Wife living in a village to which neither she nor her husband belong.
Separated	Wife and husband living in different villages and separated from each other.

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Informants		Used	Potential	% Used
	Men	98	108	91
	Women	175	175	100
	Total	273	283	96

Number of marriages in which both partners were informants 110

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after a year or so. If he keeps it going himself he visits his own village for a week or two at a time to tend the garden, and stores the produce with a relative in the village. If, however, a man intends to reside for many years in his wife's village, he gives away his garden and concentrates his labours in his wife's garden. After a year or two he builds her a storehouse in her village and the couple begin to keep their own supplies separate from those of her relatives.

Even when the couple have their own storehouse it is considered proper if from time to time they are given maize by their parents. If a woman living virilocally goes to visit her parents and relatives and returns without maize or flour her husband's relatives are likely to laugh at her and say 'She must come from a very poor family'.

Uxorilocal residence is described by the vernacular term *cikomwene*. In its most general usage this word refers to the obligations a man owes to his wife's parents, particularly at the beginning of his marriage. It has three specific meanings:

(i) Uxorilocal residence.

(ii) Assistance rendered from time to time by a man in his wife's mother's garden.

(iii) A hoeing party of men and women from the man's village which works in his wife's mother's garden.

Uxorilocal residence is classed with these other two aspects of affinal obligation and like them it can be avoided completely, shirked, or executed in full. The extent to which the obligations are fulfilled

Table XIV. Virilocality and Uxorilocality, 1948-9

Wife's residence	Husband's residence		Total
	Rural	Away	
Virilocal ..	72	14	86
Uxorilocal ..	24	20	44
Total	96	34	130
Ratio of virilocal to uxorilocal wives	3	0·7	1·95
Association between husband's residence and wife's residence $\chi^2 = 12{\cdot}83$ $P < {\cdot}001$			
Informants as in Table XIII			

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depends as much on the compliance of the man as on the insistence of his father-in-law.

A payment[10] of about five shillings is sometimes made by a man to his wife's father enabling him to take his wife to his own village. This is made either at the beginning of the marriage or after one or two years of uxorilocal residence, but in some marriages the payment is never made at all, and in some villages even the vernacular term is unknown. In those villages where the payment is recognized there is no consensus of opinion as to the rights granted by it. Some people hold that the payment is equivalent to a year or two of uxorilocal residence, and that, therefore, the money should be offered when the marriage is arranged, so that it may be begun virilocally. They go on to say that when a man has completed his period of uxorilocal residence, he is free to take his wife to his own village without making this payment. Other people say that a man ought to remain living uxorilocally until he makes this payment, which should therefore be done a year or so after marriage, or at some time later when the man wishes to move. Where the payment is not recognized, people either say that a man ought to live uxorilocally for a while and cannot buy himself out of this obligation, or else assert that the Ngoni, unlike the Cewa, do not marry uxorilocally and that the legalization payment allows a man to take a bride to his village as soon as he chooses. There is a wide variation in the norms held, or at least expressed, on this matter and an equally wide variation in actual behaviour. Men select their course of action by reference to the total situation in which they find themselves when they marry. A man may try to enforce one rule on one son-in-law and another rule on another. I observed one extreme case in which a man allowed one of his daughters, married to a man from her own village, to move to her husband's cluster after only a few months of uxorilocal residence in his own cluster. At the same time he would not allow another daughter to move to her husband's village after four years of uxorilocal residence, despite the offer of ten shillings payment to him. He approved of the first son-in-law while disliking the second, who had failed to report to him when his daughter first became pregnant.

We have talked of the man's village and the woman's village. It is perhaps necessary to stress that what is meant by, say, the man's village is a village to which the man's ties are stronger than those of his wife. It is likely to be a village where some relative of his is living, but the relative may be his father or his mother or his father's mother or his mother's father or some more distant connexion. Sometimes a man goes to live in his first wife's village and then brings in his second wife. The second wife is then said to be living virilocally, in the village of her husband rather than in her own, although the man is himself living in his first wife's village,

[10] *Nihalula*. Cf. Barnes, op. cit. p. 229

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591 602 that is, in uxorilocal marriage. In the man's village there are likely to be relatives of his wife already established, but it is she who is said to 'follow' her husband to the village and not he who 'follows' her, since his ties to the village, and to the cluster in the village within which they set up their household, are stronger than hers. Similarly a man may have relatives of his own living in his wife's village and yet be spoken of as living uxorilocally. If a woman's father is living in her village, he will be the focus of her husband's obligations. But if he lives a long way away and the woman has been dependent on her grandparents, or on her mother's brother, then it is they who will act towards her husband to some extent in [606] the role of substitute parents-in-law. However, a man does not avoid his substitute mother-in-law as thoroughly as he would his wife's own mother.

606 583 The obligation on a man to help his wife's parents in their garden is expressed in two ways. Once during the marriage the man must provide a party of people to hoe for the greater part of one day in his wife's mother's garden. He must also be prepared to work in this garden from time to time when he is called upon, and his wife may work with him. While the labour given by the man and his wife is useful labour, the work done by the hoeing party is only partly useful and may do more damage than good. The procedure is that the man, or a relative of his, tells his father-in-law that he proposes to bring a party to hoe on such-and-such a day. By agreeing to this the father-in-law tacitly agrees also to provide the party with beer and presents. On the appointed day, early in the morning, the party arrives and begins work. When the father-in-law thinks the work has gone on long enough, he sends an intermediary to offer a present to the leader of the hoers. If the present is considered sufficient the party stops hoeing and returns to the father-in-law's village. If not, it continues to hoe with renewed vigour. At intervals the father-in-law sends intermediaries with higher and higher offers until at last the hoers are satisfied or exhausted and they come into the village to collect their presents and beer. As often as not the hoers try to force the father-in-law to offer a present at the limit of his resources, for example a beast, and, as the offers mount, the workers become more and more excited and their hoeing less and less useful. At the end of a day, with the light failing, physically exhausted hoers begin to root up the maize with the weeds, and the mother-in-law's garden may be seriously damaged. If the father-in-law is obstinate and does not offer them what they want the hoers may spend the night sleeping out in the garden. By the next morning everyone is too tired to continue the matter further, and the party disperses.[11]

[154] This sort of hoeing party may not facilitate the cultivation of good maize but it is of great significance to the married couple and the

[11] See Appendix III for an account of two of these parties.

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586 attitude towards her can be tested only when, if ever, he returns to the rural area.

A man whose wife runs away and who will not return may likewise continue to hope that one day she will change her mind and return to him, and for this reason will not divorce her. Unlike a woman, a man in this condition does not jeopardize his chances by taking a fresh spouse, and therefore it is rare to find a man whose only wife is one separated from him. It will be seen from Table III that there were no men separated from all their wives included in the sample.

593 In both separation and in the procedure by which a man 'leaves his wife in disgust',[17] sexual intercourse ceases between the couple. In other respects the two procedures are quite distinct. When a man 'leaves his wife in disgust', he stops sleeping with her but he continues to treat her as his wife. She has her hut next to her co-wives, her husband sits on her verandah, and she can rely on his help in the garden and in the care of her children. If she is separated from him, she must fend for herself. Her status as wife is significant only in that she does not marry anyone else.

6. The absent husband

A man appeals to his kinsfolk for support, but they do not replace him in the marriage relationship. His wife is linked mystically to him but not to them, and the right of sexual access to her is held by him alone. It cannot be exercised on his behalf by his kinsmen. He takes the initiative in appealing to them in a marital dispute, and his agreement is necessary at each fresh stage of events. If, however, the man is not there, his kin act on his behalf as far as they are able.

593 Most adult men, at some time or other, go away to work in the towns
169 or mines. Some men take their wives with them but at any one time, as can be seen from Table IV, between a quarter and a third of all married women living in the rural area have their husbands away working either in Fort Jameson township, in the towns of Northern and Southern Rhodesia, or living permanently on the tobacco farms around Fort Jameson. When a man goes away to work, no one can tell when he will return. Some men go off and never write or come home again. Others write regularly, send home money and clothes, come home themselves for visits, and remain in close contact with those at home. Friends and relatives may give news of a long vanished migrant whom they have met in Southern Rhodesia.

For at least the first two or three years the assumption is made that a man intends to return, even if he does not write. If his wife [591] is living uxorilocally she will probably continue to do so. If she is living in her husband's village, as long as she stays there she can depend to some extent on the support of her husband's relatives, who may help her with her hut and garden, and if they are kind-hearted

[17] See above, p. 41.

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and have the money to spare, they may buy her clothes. The only ways in which she can raise money easily for herself are by brewing beer, making pots, and working on the farms. To work on a farm she must, however, remove herself from the surveillance of her husband's kin, and unless she goes to join a contingent from their village working at the farm, they may think she is running away from them to seek a lover or new husband. We have seen, however, from Table XIV that significantly more wives whose husbands are away live uxorilocally.

Many husbands write home, not only to their wives, and some remit postal orders and bank-notes. A man may get a friend who is returning from Southern Rhodesia to take home blankets and other bulky articles to be handed over to his wife. He may send presents like these direct to his wife or he may think it more prudent to send them to his father or brother and allow them to hand on to his wife as much as they think fit. The woman must then behave herself in the eyes of her affines if she wishes to receive her husband's presents. The acceptance of these gifts is taken as proof that the woman is still dependent on her husband however long he stays away. If the woman applies to the court for a divorce on the ground of desertion, the presents will be cited by her husband's kinsfolk as evidence that there is no intention on his part to desert. Gluckman reports from the Lozi that even if a man sends goods, after a statutory period the court will hold that 'a woman marries a man and not a blanket', that is, the husband must return to look after and sleep with his wife as well as send clothes to her. This argument is not used among the Ngoni. A woman who complains that she is not satisfied with marriage under these conditions is told to write to her absent husband and ask him for the fare to join him in Southern Rhodesia.

Case history 10

Saul was working in Nyasaland. He sent home to his wife 7*s*. 6*d*. for clothes. Later she wrote to him saying she wanted him to return. He sent her 15*s*., being 5*s*. for clothes and 10*s*. bus fare so that she could join him. She did not go and later went to the court complaining she had been deserted. Her husband's relatives argued, to the satisfaction of the court, that as her husband had sent her these gifts he was still taking care of her. The court dismissed her plea as she had refused to go to Nyasaland when the fare had been sent.

The husband's relatives try to watch carefully the movements of the woman so that they may prevent or at least report any adultery on her part. If they are in touch with the husband, they write to him should they suspect infidelity. Sometimes the husband ignores their letter, sometimes he gives them instructions how they should proceed in the matter, and sometimes he returns to the village to see for himself what is going on. He arrives without warning and hopes to catch his wife in the act. If all is well and he is satisfied that his wife has been faithful he usually goes back to work again.

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related to him but her participation was explained in terms of her status as an 'important person' and not in terms of this relationship.

A man can move from his village to his wife's village if he or she has quarrelled with his kinsfolk, and a quarrel with her relatives may cause them to move in the reverse direction. These shifts from one kind of residence to another occurred in a different context in the old system. We have seen that there was sometimes a change from uxorilocal to virilocal residence, for at the beginning of his first marriage a man might leave his wife living uxorilocally until he had paid bridewealth. If there was a quarrel between a man and his wife's kin at this stage, they might try to delay his taking the woman to his own village, although they could not entirely prevent him from so doing. Hostility found expression in the desire to keep him under close surveillance, not in the desire to be rid of him. This old idea still persists to some extent, as we have seen in the story of Abner and Esther (p. 79). Esther wanted her husband Abner to live in her village so that her father could see that he looked after her well. A man may refuse to allow his daughter to move to her husband's village until he is satisfied that the young man is a good husband. This line of action, however, now applies only at the beginning of a marriage and in families where a man is determined to maintain his control over his growing children. When there is a quarrel involving a couple who have been married for a long time, it is then too late to hope that a man will improve his behaviour under the eye of his wife's father. If he quarrels with his father-in-law it is better that he should go and live in his own village.

The significance of the reverse move, from virilocality to uxorilocality, was different in the old system from what it is in the new. In the light of what we know of the South-Eastern Bantu and by reference to the present position among the Ngoni it seems probable that in the old days it did happen from time to time that a man sought refuge with his wife's agnates. Yet from the dearth of instances of this in my genealogical material it would seem that this cannot have occurred very often. Once a man had established himself in virilocal residence he usually stayed there. If he quarrelled with his kinsfolk all he could do was to move off and make his own segment distinct from those of his brothers; he could not seek permanent shelter with his wife's kinsfolk. Nowadays he can do so, and it may be easier for him to change to uxorilocal residence than to try to form his own group. In the old days the transition from what we now call a cluster to a division or from a division to a village was a gradual one. Spatial separation between minor segments of the same order was initially a matter of yards and with successive moves in the tribal migration became a matter of miles. Nowadays there is a definite number of villages recognized by the Administration and a man who establishes his own residential cluster of huts is, or at least was until very recently, in danger of punishment for not living in a recognized village. For many years there was an

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Administrative ruling that no new village could be started without a minimum of ten taxpayers, and earlier it was the policy of the Administration to decrease the number of independent villages. These policies have now changed, and throughout the period there have always been devices for lessening their effect, but it is still true that sometimes the easiest way for a man to flee from his kinsmen is to build his hut in his wife's village.

Case history 14

Samuel's father was headman of a village. Samuel[58] married in the village and had four sons by his wife before she died. His second wife lived with him virilocally and after she had borne two children she committed adultery with one of Samuel's elder brothers. Samuel divorced her and married a third wife who died soon after. Samuel accused his brothers of killing his first and third wives by sorcery. He married a fourth wife and went to live in her village, taking with him his four sons by his first wife and the elder child by his second wife. He is still registered at his father's village and attends there whenever the District Officer tours the area, but he has little to do with his brothers.

In this way the movements of men and women between villages reflect the struggles between kinsfolk and between affines. Besides the formation of new villages, which goes on despite obstacles placed in the way, there is a continual reshuffling of the elements making up the existing villages. Through marriage a man acquires affines and through them places where he can live if he wants to do so. This change in the structure of the village is therefore related to the new role of villages in the administrative scheme, the new rules for their formation, and the new kinds of movement from one village to another. By reason of his marriages the number of moves that a man can make if need be is increased.

3. *Polygyny*

The other important structural change that has been directly related to external influences is the decreased incidence of polygyny. In the old days a man acquired dependants in two ways, by begetting them and by capturing them. Wealth consisted of cattle and dependants, and the well-remembered names of the past are those of patriarchs with dozens of wives whose offspring now form the core of many villages. Nowadays the missions oppose polygyny, wealth can be acquired in other ways than by the marriage of daughters, and a variety of relatives with different genealogical ties can be gathered round one as dependants. It is rare to find a man with as many as five wives. With the decline in polygyny the system of ranking that was used to organize large compound households has fallen into decay, and except when the issue has been complicated by the payment of bridewealth, wives are simply ranked in chronological order of marriage. With the increased importance

[58] See genealogy, p. 81.

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of maternal ties, the cleavage between sets of father's children is an expression more of their different matrilateral affiliations than of the different status of their mothers. A child will be sent to its own mother's mother rather than to its father's wife's mother, although some children do go to the latter. Samuel's children by his first and third wives [3] were reared by their father's fourth wife's mother, but they maintain contact with their own mothers' relatives.

These particular structural changes have taken place without any great conflict of values. It would appear that although polygyny was an essential feature of the old system, there was no idea that it was wrong to remain monogamous. Indeed in any community with a normal sex ratio, the majority of men must be monogamists and it is not surprising that monogamy is tolerated however much polygyny is the goal of ambitious men. Among the Ngoni the decline in polygyny over the last fifty years has not outraged traditional values. In like manner, we have seen that traditionally a man's mother and his wife's mother should share the rearing of his children. This division is in accord with the statement made frequently by aristocratic Ngoni that when distributing gifts a man ought not to favour his own parents more than his wife's. Both these injunctions indicate that even in 'the time of peace', however clearly a man's children by a wife for whom he had paid bridewealth belonged to his group and not to hers, the claims of a wife's kinsfolk and their interest in the children of the marriage were recognized. Ngoni say that children ought to live in their father's village, but this is a statement of the same order as the oft-reiterated remark that the Ngoni pay bridewealth. Ngoni make these statements because these are part of the index of their tribal identity, not because they have observed them to be true. The facility with which married couples live uxorilocally is no doubt partly due to the influence of the matrilineal uxorilocal Cewa and other tribes, but we cannot regard this as the only operative factor.

4. *The moral significance of sexual activity*

In the treatment of sexual activity in girls there does appear to be a certain moral dilemma. We have observed that the Cewa believed that a girl who did not copulate at puberty would die, and that the Ngoni held that a girl should be chaste until she was married, which was some time after puberty. The seclusion of girls was, and is, a matter arranged by women and one in which men have very little say. It may be on this account that the Cewa view has largely prevailed, for the Ngoni took many women captives and in the early stages of the migration from Natal there seem to have been more Ngoni men than women. The women were not so carefully indoctrinated into the Ngoni way of life as were men captives, for the women's regimental system was never as highly

[3] See above, p. 109

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had been paid, it was her husband and not her father who initiated proceedings against her and her lover. Residence was equated with political allegience, and therefore it was inappropriate that her children should live in their father's village until he had acquired rights in them, that is until he had acquired rights *in genetricem* in his wife. These rights were transferred with the payment of bridewealth. The holder of the rights both *in uxorem* and *in genetricem* was the husband, but on his death the rights *in uxorem* passed to a junior patrilineal kinsman of the same generation while the rights *in genetricem* remained in the man's own segment. If the woman was barren, it was incumbent on those who had been recompensed for the transfer of rights *in genetricem* to provide another wife whose children occupied the position of children of the barren wife.

Nowadays the legalization payment confers rights *in uxorem* and bridewealth rights *in genetricem*. Rights *in genetricem* are inherited in the same way as before, but rights *in uxorem* do not pass automatically to a younger brother of the husband on his death. If a widow agrees to be inherited, and a younger brother willing to have her, then he acquires rights *in uxorem* over her without any further legalization payment. If, however, either no younger brother is forthcoming or the widow is unwilling, the rights revert to the woman's own group, who cannot themselves exercise them. When she takes a new husband he makes the legalization payment to them, and not to the kin of the dead husband, and thereby acquires his rights *in uxorem*. If rights *in genetricem* have already been transferred to the dead husband, the new husband can never acquire them. If at the beginning of a marriage bridewealth is offered, its acceptance transfers both rights *in uxorem* and *in genetricem*.

Whereas the rights *in genetricem* were definite in the old system, in the new they are vague and of doubtful value. In the old scheme they were related to position in a residential system of which one of the generating principles was patrilineal descent and succession. With the breakdown of this system one can no longer say so clearly that a man belongs to one group of kinsmen rather than another. The lineage segment is no longer a significant group with spatial reference and a hierarchy of authority. Kinsmen, however related, who live near one another tend to help each other, visit one another, and support each other in quarrels and in visits to court. Some of the men and women who go to court in support of A will also go in support of B, while others will not. B shares certain supporters with C, and so on. The men and women who are relatives and neighbours cannot be divided into a collection of mutually exclusive groups, for membership of one man's group partly overlaps with membership of another's, and every man has, as it were, a different set of people, some of them patrilateral kin, some matrilateral, and some affines, whom he is prepared to support. There is no widely-held indigenous theory of procreation such as in other cultures provides a rationaliza-

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tion for associating children with one parent rather than the other. There is only the one proud dogma that the Ngoni, unlike their neighbours, are a patrilineal virilocal people. This reflects the actual dominance of the virilocal mode of residence but does not furnish a rule to which appeal can be made in specific cases. The only definite unit to which a man can be said to belong is his village, and such few attempts as are made to enforce rights *in genetricem* are expressed in terms of residence in villages. In marriages that are made outside the tribe, rights *in genetricem* become significant, for a child is not likely to wander to and fro between one tribe and another hundreds of miles away in the same way as children change from one village to another within the kingdom. Here then we find more attention paid to the payment of bridewealth and to rights *in genetricem* and these rights are enforceable through the police checks on buses and lorries.

If a man is away working his interests are represented by his kinsfolk. They cannot exercise his rights *in uxorem* for him, but if they are violated they can act on his behalf. His permission is necessary, however, before they can proceed to the court, and if they are awarded damages then they are under some sort of obligation to hand over the money to him when he returns. There was no situation comparable to this in the old system, for men did not go away for years at a time, and the violation of rights *in uxorem* was punishable by death.

The position of the man as holder of rights *in uxorem* over his wife is reinforced to some extent by mystical ties believed to connect the couple, and at the same time the man can fortify his rights by the use of medicines to ensure fidelity. During pregnancy, for a short while after childbirth, and during menstruation, the actions of man and wife affect one another automatically, and each is placed in danger of illness by the failure of the other to observe their mutual obligations. To protect his rights *in uxorem* a man may doctor his wife so that possible violators may be deterred by the fear of mystical retribution as well as action in the courts.

7. *Mystical beliefs and marriage stability*

The mystical connexion believed to exist between a man and his wife serves to define their relationship more closely, for this same connexion does not hold between a woman and her husband's kin or between a man and his wife's kin. The adultery of a pregnant woman's brother-in-law, like her husband's adultery, may threaten the peace of her local group of relatives and friends, and may even lead her to change her village or go to the court as a supporter. The important distinction between the adultery of her husband's brother and her husband's adultery is that the former does not automatically endanger her delivery while the latter does. A man confesses his adultery when his own wife gives birth, not when her sister is in labour. This connexion is definite, and is not extended

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unity of full-siblings is the result of the established relationship between their mother and father. A man's relationship with his wife may in turn lead to solidarity between their children, but until his wife has stayed with him for many years and borne him live children their own relationship is always uncertain. He must acknowledge that she too has rights, that she must be clothed and respected and must be slept with. He must not abuse her at a beer party or hit her too often, and he must not try to trap her into adultery. When she runs away, he must go after her to apologize.

8. The support of relatives

It is the tenuousness of the marriage relationship which necessitates the co-operation of the relatives in the marriage. There are occasions when affines quarrel, as when a young woman is encouraged by her husband's kin to remain in their village to be delivered of her first child and at the same time is under pressure from her own relatives to move back to her own village for the confinement. A man who is anxious to build up his own cluster of huts in a village may attempt to force his sons and daughters to bring their spouses to live near him against the wishes of his children's affines. These struggles, where they occur, are expressed in terms of residence, for it is common residence that welds kinsfolk together. But in general affines co-operate rather than quarrel. Litigation about marriage payments is rare, and frequently divorces are granted without consideration of the return of marriage payments. During a marriage it is more important that the married couple should be exhorted to adjust themselves to each other and be tolerant of each other's foibles, than that each side should insist on its formal rights. Old people try to prevent marriages they consider unsuitable, but they do not usually try to make difficulties once a marriage has taken place. The successful marriages of a man's children bring him grandchildren to care for and play with, and *children's parents-in-law* who will welcome him and give him food, even if they do not always add to his own cluster of huts.

To some degree people appear to be afraid of the sorcery of an offended affine, but this is not a well-developed idea, and more frequently people express their reasons for trying to patch up a marriage that is in danger of breaking in terms of the need for everyone to 'live well together', without bringing troubles into the village. The well-being of the village and of the local group of kinsfolk within it has ultimate value for the Ngoni and is an end in itself. It follows that serious quarrels can only be resolved by means of some new residential alignment, invplving moves from one cluster to another, and from one village to another. The village itself does not exist in isolation, and a village thrives because of the ties that link it to other villages in the vicinity. Marriages link villages together, by the bonds of affinity which cut across village boundaries, and by the interaction between groups of affines

4: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)1951 FR5 Ngoni FR5
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as one from a graded segmentary society organized on a basis of patrilineal descent and modified by political promotion to a society of villages organized on a basis of omnidirectional kinship. In the past a man lived in the same place as his father and in charge of the segment allocated to him by his father. Now a man lives where he can find relatives of one kind or another who may be related to him agnatically, cognatically, affinally, or by any combination of these ways. He is not even restricted to consanguineal relatives, as in cognatic kinship systems, for he can affiliate himself to some person who is linked cognatically neither to him or to any of his potential descendants, as when he goes to live with his father's wife's mother's brother. Genealogical connexion can be traced along all possible paths and there are no mechanisms by which one path is automatically favoured or by which the length of a path is restricted. In consequence the genealogical constitution of any local group of relatives is complex, and every man is a potential recruit to many local groups. He selects between the numerous possibilities open to him on the basis of his own inclinations and in response to the various pressures exerted on him by his siblings, his parents, his wife, her parents, and others. Once he has made his choice he can always change his mind and move elsewhere if he finds his neighbours irksome. His wealth, either in cattle or money, is his own and he can take it with him when he moves. There are no rights in land (with the one exception of dry season gardens) which might otherwise tie him to one particular spot. As with residence, so with marriage payments, the formal and informal procedures of marriages, and the values associated with them. In all, considerable variation is tolerated. Indeed, we may well regard variation as a necessity in this system, for every man is subject to a mass of potential conflicting claims and he cannot possibly honour them all simultaneously. Variation occurs not because of different practices by various sections of the population but rather because of different individual decisions. A man decides for himself whether or not he will pay bridewealth, or take a hoeing party to his wife's mother's garden, or be suspended from the sacraments for marrying a second wife. Yet although he makes these choices himself, he is all the time subject to social pressure from kinsfolk and neighbours who will be affected by his decisions and who therefore try to influence them. A woman is not quite so free as a man, but she too can make many decisions for herself, and her relatives must appeal to her if they wish to influence her, for they cannot force her against her will. Man and wife living together are in a unique relationship which is personal and non-transferable, yet they live in the midst of kinsfolk and the well-being of one relative is the concern of all. The quarrels of a married couple are a danger to the cohesion of the local group in which they live, while the longer they live together, fertile and peaceful, the greater the local solidarity.

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592 mother. One of the man's sisters conducts the wife to her mother-
252 in-law's hut, and under the instruction of the assembled women
593 she begins to cook. Although people speak of her doing the cooking,
in practice all she does is to look on while her sisters-in-law do
[064] the work. The porridge is divided onto plates and distributed under the directions of the man's mother. One plate is sent to the man's father, one to the husband who eats the porridge with his brothers, and one to the most important woman in the village, while some are taken by the cooks themselves. The man's father is expected to remark on how well the porridge has been cooked, but he may say that it has been poorly prepared and his daughter-in-law must be taught again. This expression of disapproval cannot be more than a way of showing his dislike for his daughter-in-law for whatever he says the ceremony is not repeated and the woman begins to cook regularly for her husband. If the man's relatives are wealthy, they may kill a goat or a sheep on this occasion, or the woman's parents may send a sheep or a goat to be killed and eaten. The woman's parents cannot themselves attend the ceremony.

If the couple begin their marriage uxorilocally this ceremony
[591] does not take place. The bride begins to cook for her husband as soon as he comes to live with her, using her grand-mother's hut as a kitchen.

Appendix III

THE HOEING PARTY

606 A man is under an obligation to provide once during his marriage
583 a party of hoers who work in his wife's mother's garden for the greater part of one day and who are rewarded by his wife's father. This party is called by the general word for obligations owed by a man towards his parents-in-law, *cikomwene*.[1] The function of this occasion, as a socially sanctioned method of expression of hostility between a man and his affines, has already been discussed. I attended one of these parties and my clerk attended two others.

The man, or a relative of his, tells his father that he is planning to bring a party to hoe on such and such a day. If the father-in-law agrees that the day is suitable he tells his wife to brew beer for the hoers. On the agreed day the hoeing party arrive early in the morning and begin to work in the garden. The father-in-law promises presents to the leader of the hoers, who continue to hoe until they are offered what they consider is sufficient. They then stop, and go to the village to receive the present and drink beer.

[1] See above, p. 74.

10. *Forbidden and Enjoined Unions (Ngoni).*

The Angoni are patrilineal, and in the case of a mixed Ngoni-Chewa marriage the child always takes the clan (*vide infra*, Section IV) of the father, whether bride-price has been paid or not. The children of brother and sister may marry each other, but not the children of two brothers or half-brothers, nor the children of two sisters or half-sisters. As with the Achewa, so also with the Angoni it is no longer considered incestuous to marry someone of the same clan. 611 582 614

11. *Forms of Marriage (Ngoni).*

When an Mngoni wishes to marry, he sends a male friend without a gift to inform the girl's father of his desire. The father calls his wife, male relations and headman to discuss the matter; and, if they agree to the proposal, the friend returns with the news to the prospective bridegroom who, several days later, despatches his *anknowse* with a present to the *anknowse* of the girl. There are always two *anknowse* on each side, neither more nor less. A father is ineligible; and brothers, sister's sons and fellow-villagers are generally chosen, as they are more likely to be at hand if required at any time. The present is only symbolic, and generally takes the form of a goat, though in the case of a wealthy bridegroom it may be a cow or something equally substantial. This part of the procedure is known as *ku-ongu*, and as soon as the present has been received by the bride's father, the marriage is valid in law. 584 [583]

A few days later, the groom sends a friend to conduct the girl to his house. She comes with several elder women and other girl friends, but her mother may not join the party. The bridegroom provides for them a feast of beer and meat in commensuration with his wealth. He presents beads to his wife, this ceremony being known as *ku-tewlera*, and sends a cloth (known as *mcheku*) to her mother, after which the women return home on the same day without consummation having been effected. [574] [431]

About a week later, accompanied by a small boy, the man proceeds by night to his father-in-law's house, and is given an empty house, where he sleeps with his wife. He must avoid being seen by any of the villagers, and therefore departs before daylight, going to a neighbouring village for food and rest, and returning on the following night, when the same precautions must be observed. [833]

On the second morning he goes back to his village, and after two or three weeks sends a friend to fetch his wife. This time she comes openly, and sleeps with him for two or three nights in any available hut, after which she returns to her father. [833]

The husband then begins to build her house at his village, and to pay the bride-price. This process is known as *kulowola*, or *kupereka mabeku*. The *mabeku*, or bride-price, may consist of cows, or cash, or other goods; and it varies in value according to the standing of the parties. If the bride is fully grown, payment should be completed within four or five months. Nowadays, however, Ngoni girls are generally married shortly before they reach the age of puberty, and in such cases a year or two may be allowed; but when the husband is unnecessarily dilatory, his father-in-law may oblige him to build a house near his own and to live there until he has fulfilled his contract; and until the bride-price has been paid in full, he cannot expect his wife to reside with him permanently at his own village. 583 591 [582]

8: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949) 1951 FR5 Ngoni FR5

829 178 blame the Europeans for it; but it remains part of the distinctive cultural heritage of the tribe.

182 As we might expect, notions of this kind do not provide sanctioned standards of conduct nor ideal patterns towards which Ngoni strive. They may be used to explain or justify a state of affairs, as we have seen, but they do not directly determine action. An individual who departs from traditional custom, in these terms, is not necessarily censured. Indeed, men who are knowledgeable about the glorious past do not follow traditional ways any more than do less-well-informed people. According to tradition the Ngoni are a virilocal people, yet if a man goes to live with his wife's relatives his own kinsfolk cannot force him to return by appeal to this virilocal tradition. Traditionally a man avoids his mother-in-law. Yet I once saw an aristocratic man, a great authority on traditional history, on leave from work sitting on a verandah chatting with his mother-in-law. I said to him, "I thought a man should avoid his mother-in-law." He laughed and replied, "Yes, so he should. This behaviour is disgusting, and as soon as I come to live here permanently I shall see that customs are properly followed."

[591] [606]

647 619 693 184 648 182 In certain situations the Fort Jameson Ngoni appear as a tribe in contrast to other tribes. The tribe is an administrative unit, with its own chiefs, its own area and sometimes its own District Officer. Representatives from each tribe in the region sit together to form the Native Urban Court and the Provincial Advisory Council. The Ngoni representatives on these bodies tend to present distinctively Ngoni views to contrast with the views of their colleagues. Thus there may be a discussion on wills. There is an Ngoni view, a Cewa view, and so on. The Ngoni representative repeats the old story about bridewealth, virilocal residence, the rights of the eldest son, and these are recorded as being the Ngoni custom in the matter. Even when discussing such an apparently modern issue as wills, the tendency is to go back to this mythical past. It is in terms of this past, in reality as well as in myth, that Ngoni are different from their neighbours. In the present, as contrasted with Europeans, Ngoni and Cewa are much the same. Ngoni pay bridewealth in the same way as the English eat roast beef. It is a national characteristic, but

183 one located in the minds of men rather than observable in their actions or their aspirations. Instead of the scarifications and totemic observances which distinguish their neighbours, Ngoni express their tribal identity by having distinctive customs which, conveniently, need not be followed.

183 692 184 671 692 183 In the Native Urban Court a similar process appears to operate, but here, unlike at the Advisory Council, there is a greater need to come to grips with real situations which require action, and tribal distinctiveness is tempered with practical reality. In the purely Ngoni Native Courts appeals are made to traditional practice in a different way. The courts are required by the Administration to follow tribal custom and people know that the courts are bound in this way. In fact, however, the courts have continually to deal with new situations and to make decisions which are unprecedented. This is done

10: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949) 1959
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241 those who have not been working. Some people choose to do their
273 work in the garden on the day previous to the party, on the theory
476 that working and drinking do not go together. A few people offer
baskets of ground-nuts or other crops or meat in return for a day's
[465] labour, and monetary payments are also known.

Craftsmen

463 There are a number of specialized occupations which give rise to inter-village trading. Pots are made by women. Some villages have no
323 potter and their inhabitants are dependent on pot-makers in neigh-
[462] bouring villages. Sometimes a woman may acquire a reputation for pot-making sufficiently high to attract custom even from villages where there are already pot-makers. Pots are sold in return for their own volume of maize, or for money, or the customers may be required to provide sufficient clay for twice the amount of pottery that they wish to obtain.

285 Basketry is a man's craft, and at the end of the rainy season, when
[462] it is necessary to watch all day in the gardens for monkeys, men with this skill spend their time at it. Baskets are sold for money or for maize, and, as with pottery, there is a certain amount of inter-village sale.

759 Herbalists draw their clients from a wider area than do the pot- and basket-makers, and their contacts with their patients are more intense. If a man falls sick, the remedies known in the family are tried first, but if these are unsuccessful he may go to someone who is known for his wide knowledge of medicines. Patients will travel up to 15 miles or so to consult a herbalist, who may require them to live in his village to receive treatment. Payment for medical treatment is sometimes demanded part in advance, but other practitioners ask for a fee only when a cure has been effected. Since the establishment of medical
[648] services by the Administration the way has been open for the medical orderlies to operate in opposition to the herbalists, using misappropriated European drugs.

III. THE FAMILY

Principles of Descent

611 The Ngoni are traditionally a patrilineal patrilocal people paying
[591] bride-wealth with cattle. This tradition is reflected in modern prac-
[583] tice only to a limited extent. Many of the men and women who were
[184] incorporated after Zwangendaba had crossed the Zambezi came from

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marriages in which bride-wealth was paid were patrilocal, and those in which it was not paid, except for marriages with slave wives, were matrilocal. The matrilocal marriages were made only by recently incorporated Ngoni. The payment of bride-wealth is now significant only in relation to the residence and affiliation of the children of the marriage and does not affect the residence of the couple themselves. It frequently happens that a man goes and lives in the village of his wife when they are first married and that after a year or so he takes her back to his own village. This practice is fairly common among the matrilineal tribes of the region. A small payment[1] of five shillings or so may be made instead to enable a man to take his bride to his own village without first completing a period of matrilocal residence. Sometimes the legalization payment is considered sufficient to exempt from matrilocal residence. Indeed it is indicative of the wide range of variation in the different payments made and not made and in the significance attached to them that some informants were unable to state with certainty what payments had been made in their own marriages, although they knew the amount of money or animals that had been handed over.

This wide range of variation in behaviour in relation to marriage is one instance of the high measure of cultural heterogeneity of the Fort Jameson Ngoni. While present-day conditions are relevant to a study of Ngoni marriage, at the same time the effect of the combination of people with very different conceptions of marriage into a single state must not be overlooked. Among families that are powerful and claim to have migrated with Zwangendaba from the south, patrilocal marriage and the payment of bride-wealth are more frequent than they are among families of more recent incorporation. Cross-cousin marriage is noticeably more frequent in villages with people of Bisa descent than in the population as a whole. In Nyasaland, where there is a sharper cleavage into old Ngoni villages and conquered Cewa villages, the old Ngoni are characterized by a greater, and the Cewa by a lesser, incidence of patrilocal marriage.

Divorce

In the old days there was no way in which a woman could divorce her husband. A man could divorce his wife at any time by sending her back to her own people. The usual procedure nowadays, except in cases of adultery, is for the man to give his wife sixpence or a shilling

[1] *Ntakula.*

/5 cont'd/

614 Clan names, however, are inherited from the father in most Ngoni
551 families. These names are used as surnames for the purposes of the
576 Administration, and as forms of polite address. On marriage, a man
438 and wife may live in either the village of the man or of the woman,
591 although the custom whereby initially they should live in the village of the woman for a few years is still followed by some.

III

361 In the village there are dwelling huts, storehouses, pens for the small animals, drying platforms, and cattle byres. The huts are often arranged in rather uneven parallel lines, with all the huts facing
351 the same way. The fences found in other parts of the country enclosing a small courtyard round the hut, are not often seen here.
342 Each married woman has her own hut, and possibly a smaller hut as
423 well, used as a kitchen and sleeping place for visitors and children. Unmarried adolescents of one sex sleep together in modest huts they
882 have built for themselves or else in a hut left empty by a former resident. Where bamboos are available, as in the north and east of
349 the area, they are used to form the framework of a circular hut. The
[624] walls are made in two concentric circles, with mud plastered on the inside of the inner circle, but with the outer circle often left unmudded. The walls are made in unbroken circles, doorways being cut out later with an axe. The space between the two circles is used
[353] for storing pots and other household goods and is sometimes used for cooking. The bamboos are woven together, split bamboos going horizontally and unsplit ones vertically, so that light is able to pass through the unplastered wall. Open lattice fencing is also found forming part of the outer wall.

Where bamboos are not available, either circular or rectangular huts of poles and mud are made. Rectangular huts are often subdivided with a partition wall, to make a separate sleeping place, while the verandah may be partly walled in to make a cooking shelter protected from the weather. With both bamboo and pole huts, the

13:Fraser M-5 (ca. 1890)1901
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when the death penalty can hardly be exacted, or compensation made in the delivery over of slaves, they find it hard to satisfy demands and make a show of justice.

Now let us speak of the social life of the people. The Ngoni differ from most of the Central Africa tribes in their habit of living in large unprotected villages. The tendency of most of the other tribes is to scatter themselves in very little hamlets over a wide area, with scarcely a path of communication between the villages. Where war has harassed them they have built huge stockaded villages for their mutual protection, but as soon as assured peace has come again, the towns have split into numerous distant groups of houses. This seems to be caused by the dread and mistrust of one another which the people have through their superstitious belief in a evil eye, and in witchcraft, and through the perpetual little quarrels that arise. A carrier who was accompanying a friend of mine described this state very well when they passed a little village of four huts, and then a few hundred yards farther on an isolated hut. Holding up his hand he cried, "Look at Mr. Thumb saying to Messrs. Fourfingers, keep your distance."

The heart of a Ngoni village is the large circular cattle kraal. There all the court cases are tried, there the visitors are received, and there the dances are held. Round the kraal the village of bechive huts is built in regular rows, and then immediately outside the gardens begin. The village life takes the place of family life, and the headman is father of all the people. The boys after they have attained to twelve years of age or so live in huts by themselves, and the girls in huts on the opposite side of the village. These girls' quarters used to be most sacredly guarded, and any man found in their enclosure after dark could be killed.

The great part of the Ngoni nation consists of domestic slaves. They are people, or the descendants of people, who have been captured in raiding expeditions. But their position is not a hard one. If they are discontented they may change masters. They give their masters a little free labour, and in return are made members of his family; he espouses all their quarrels, looks after them in sickness, and shares some of his superfluity with them, but they have to share some of their necessities with him.

Polygamy was the universal custom of the people until recently. Now hundreds of polygamous unions are being dissolved every year. But in the rougher days polygamy was a necessary